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MU Announces New Chancellor

Texas A&M President R. Bowen Loftin assumes role
Feb. 1, 2014.



Interim Chancellor Steve Owens, left, and UM System President Tim Wolfe applaud for R. Bowen Loftin.

Story by Mark Barna

Photos by Nicholas Benner

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Columbia might experience a rise in bow tie purchases.

Administrators introduced on Thursday the 22nd chief executive officer of the University of Missouri in Columbia. R. Bowen Loftin, president of Texas A&M since February 2010, will assume leadership on Feb. 1.

Known for his good humor, accessibility to students and extensive experience in higher education, Loftin is also known for wearing colorful bow ties. At the announcement, Loftin, 64, wore a black-and-gold one.

“You have a lot to be proud of at Mizzou,” Loftin told an overflow audience in the Reynolds Alumni Center. “Let’s take that and build upon it.”

Loftin’s background makes him a perfect fit for MU, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe said. Like MU, Texas A&M is a public land-grant research institution with growing enrollment and is a member of the Association of American Universities. Texas A&M also recently left the Big 12 to join the Southeastern Conference.

“His steadfast leadership and guidance elevated Texas A&M into one of the top universities in the country, which is the kind

R. Bowen Loftin

Start date as MU chancellor:

Feb. 1, 2014

Current position:

President of Texas A&M since Feb. 12, 2010

Prior positions:

Interim president of Texas A&M, June 15, 2009–Feb. 11, 2010; vice president and CEO of Texas A&M at Galveston, 2005-09; professor of electrical and computer engineering and professor of computer science at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.

Education:

Doctorate in physics from Rice University in Houston, Texas, 1975; master’s in

of excellence we demand in an MU chancellor,” Wolfe said

Loftin replaces Brady J. Deaton, who retired as chancellor Nov. 15 after nine years in the position. General Counsel Steve Owens, a former interim president for the system, is serving as interim chancellor until Loftin starts. Deputy Chancellor Michael Middleton has taken on the additional role of transition executive.

Prior to becoming president of Texas A&M, Loftin had served as interim president since June 2009. Before that, he was vice president and CEO of Texas A&M at Galveston for four years.

Loftin’s wife, Karin, holds a doctorate in biomedical sciences from the University of Texas at Houston. She has been an associate biosafety officer in Texas A&M’s Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety.

physics from Rice, 1973; bachelor’s in physics from Texas A&M, 1970

Personal:

Married to Karin Loftin, associate biosafety officer with Texas A&M’s Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety. They will live in The Residence on Francis Quadrangle. The couple has two grown children and three grandsons.

Source: UM System / University Relations



R. Bowen Loftin and wife Karin check out Mizzou clothing presented to them Thursday as Tim Wolfe looks on.

The months-long chancellor search moved smoothly. In July, the 18-member Chancellor Search Committee was named, with co-chairs Ann Covington, a University of Missouri curator, and Dean Mills, dean of the School of Journalism. The committee was assisted in its national search by the Los Angeles-based firm Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates, which has aided in finding other MU and system executives.

Last summer, Loftin announced his resignation as Texas A&M president due to his wanting to return to teaching and research. But a couple months later, he was approached by the search firm, Loftin said. “There aren’t too many schools I would consider” at this stage, he said. But MU “fit all the pieces.”

‘It gives me great pleasure that I match you and you match me,’ said R. Bowen Loftin

Loftin reasoned that he could effect change in more students’ lives by being a top executive.

MU Faculty Council Chair Craig Roberts was excited by the choice of Loftin because of his teaching and research experience and his participation in Texas A&M’s

Faculty Senate.

“He knows what shared governance is,” Roberts said, and there is good probability “he will make an effort

to include faculty in major decisions.”

In October, Wolfe told Faculty Council that the next chancellor would need to be on board with MU’s strategic plan, which includes recruiting top faculty, increasing research and improving the university’s AAU ranking.

As for changes the new chancellor might make, Loftin said it was premature for him to suggest possibilities.

“I’ve got a bit to learn beforehand and want to work on good data,” he said. “Change is good, but it must be done carefully.”

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